



Characteristics of Parricide

- Pattern of family violence
- Adolescent's attempts to get help failed
- Failed also in effort to escape situation
- Experience isolation
- Felt increasingly helpless
- Most adolescent murderers had no prior criminal histories

Characteristics of Parricide (cont.)

- Offenders had easy access to guns
- Alcoholism or heavy drinking was common in many studies
- Offenders may have been in dissociative state during or after killing
- Offenders and other family members indicated relief that victim was dead

Stranger Homicide

- The killing of another person or persons by an individual who is unknown to the victim.

Mass Murders: Common Characteristics

- Offenders primarily white, male, and span a wide age range
- Handguns, semiautomatic guns and rifles used to kill swiftly
- Victims often intentionally selected
- Groups of victims often bear no relationship to the perpetrator

Grief Reactions

- Emotional.
- Behavioral.
- Physical.

*A person may experience one,
some or all of these.*

Reactions of Homicide Victims: Placement in Family

- Murder of a child
- Murder of a sibling
- Murder of a spouse
- Murder of a parent

How Homicide Can Complicate Grief Reactions

- Violent nature of death.
- A sense of injustice.
- Religious implications.
- “Survivor guilt.”
- Feelings of anger and/or revenge.

Traumatic Grief

- Yearning and searching for the deceased.
- Loneliness.
- Numbness.
- Disbelief about the loss.
- Distrust.
- Anger.
- Sense of foreshortened future.
- Preoccupation with thoughts about the deceased.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

- Reexperiencing symptoms
- Avoidance Symptoms
- Hyperarousal Symptoms

POMC: Eight Problem Areas for Survivors of Homicide Victims

- Financial considerations
- Criminal justice system
- Impact on work
- Relationships are affected

POMC: Eight Problem Areas for Survivors of Homicide Victims (cont.)

- Children in the family
- Religious faith often shaken
- News media
- Professionals who do not understand
- Substance use/abuse issues (Rynearson)

How to Help Survivors

- Allow grieving in whatever manner they wish for as long as they wish
- Allow them to cry freely
- Allow survivors to talk about and personalize the victim
- Allow anger to be expressed (CJS/JJS)
- Remember survivors at holiday times and on anniversaries

How to Help Survivors (cont.)

- Allow survivors “time out”
- Reassure they they are not to blame
- Tell survivors you are sorry, and that their victimization is horrible
- Support survivors in their efforts to reconstruct their lives
- Let them know you are their friend

General “Don’ts”

- Do not tell the survivor that you understand what they are going through - you don’t.
- Do not use cliché sayings or faith based sayings
- Do not withhold information or not allow survivor access to loved one/ pictures/ autopsy/ ect. Include them in the decision of viewing.
- Do not assume or suggest “forgiveness”
- Sharing feelings are fine, but do not emote too much.

Victim Assistance Professionals Can:

- Learn about case
- Determine survivors’ need for contact
- Be familiar with stages of grief
- Personalize the deceased
- Protect survivors from media
- Determine needs re: funerals and notification responsibilities
- Understand financial considerations

Victim Assistance Professionals Can:

- Provide referrals for counseling/support
- Provide information on the CJS
- Realize that each family member will have individual needs
- Review autopsy photos for suitability for family viewing
- Prepare family for evidence to be presented in court
- Understand victim identification and disqualification from court processes

Victim Assistance Professionals Can:

- Provide all available court services
- Alert CJS officials of victims’ safety concerns or emotional concerns
- Inform survivors of right to civil action
- Provide brochure on emotional effects
- Be prepared for death penalty cases
- Offer information about Victim Impact Panels and other venues